

General Plan Update
Interest Group Meeting
April 25, 2008

Interest Group Committee:

George Courser	Back Country Coalition
Chris Duggan	SD Regional Economic Development Corporation
Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Wallace Tucker	SD Coalition for Transportation Choices
Matt Adams	BIA
Scott Thomas	American Institute of Architects
Jim Peugh	San Diego Audubon
Al Stehly	Farm Bureau
Brooke Peterson	APA
Diane Coombs	Citizen Coordinate for Century 3
Liz Higgins	San Diego Association of Realtors
Dave Shibley	Save our Land Values
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitat League

Public at Large:

Hank Palmer
Jimmie Kohler
Brice Bossler
Sachiko Kohatsu
James Greco
Greg Moorad
Jack Henthorn
Brit Coupens
Brian Siefker
Doug Paul
Ron Wootlam
Lael Montgomery
Gina Austin
Larua Houle
Vince Allen

County Staff:

Devon Muto (DPLU)
LeAnn Carmichael(DPLU)
Bob Citrano(DPLU)
Jimmy Wong(DPLU)
Eric Lardy(DPLU)
Erik Torkelson(DPLU)
Claudia Anzures(County Counsel)

Agenda Item I: Introductions

Mr. Muto began the meeting with introductions of DPLU staff and Interest Group members.

Mr. Muto also wanted to recognize the untimely passing of Mr. Mike Thometz who was a valuable participant of the interest group. Mr. Muto stated that George Courser has been nominated and approved as an alternate for the Back Country Coalition.

Mr. Muto stated the purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the significant amount of progress that was made on the project since the previous February 6, 2008 meeting. Mr. Muto explained that staff had prepared handouts, and that the meeting would focus on reviewing the handouts with time for questions and answers.

Agenda Item II: **Action Item, Meeting Minutes from 11/15/2007**

The Interest Group voted to approve the February 6th, 2008 meeting minutes. Jim Peugh motioned to abstain.

Agenda Item III: Announcements/ Project Updates

Mr. Muto was excited to announce an important milestone in the project with the completion of all the scheduled 26 community planning group meetings. These meetings were identified as an important first step by re-engaging the community into the project. Mr. Muto also stated that since September there have been a total of 7 meetings with both the Steering Committee and Interest Group.

Mr. Muto further stated that he was pleased that the General Plan Update monthly newsletter has been initiated. Mr. Muto explained that the newsletter was an excellent way to keep updated on the project. Mr. Muto stated that anyone interested in receiving the newsletter should contact staff to be added onto our mailing list.

Mr. Muto said that he was pleased to announce that the County had entered into contract with consultants PBS&J to assist in the General Plan Update. Mr. Muto explained that PBS&J have begun work by previewing the initial text documents. PBS&J is currently working with staff on revisions to the text elements as well as prepping to get the EIR process underway.

Mr. Muto also stated that 2 of the 7 of the elements have been drafted and have undergone external technical review which was the Draft Land Use, and Safety Element.

Mr. Muto stated that the 4 mapping alternatives have been completed which are the Referral Map, Draft Land Use Map, Hybrid Map, and Environmentally Superior Map.

Agenda Item IV: Presentation and Distribution of Regional Land Use Element

Mr. Muto proceeded by giving an overview of the handouts for the revised draft land use element.

Mr. Muto referred to the handout titled Overview of Revisions and explained that there were 5 major changes to the draft land use element which were; Organization of goals and policies changed with new sections; Goals and policies reviewed formatted and revised for hierarchy; Goals and policies that were reworded; Changes that were made in response to comments; and Community plans addressed and used for further detail on implementation.

Mr. Whalen asked County Counsel about the position of the County to move away from using the word “should” in the text document. Ms. Anzures answered that in some instances the word “should” may be used, but in most cases state guidelines requires the language to be more directive.

Ms. Higgins was concerned that going from “should to shall” changes the meaning of what the Interest Group initially worked on, and believes it will take much more work to get the document completed.

Mr. Adams stated that staff seems to be applying specific plan mentality, to a document that should be general in nature. Mr. Adams believes that this more directive nature does not allow the flexibility that it necessary for a General Plan. Mr. Muto stated that staff spent a lot of time identifying the issues that would arise from the more directive language, and encouraged Interest Group members to submit comments to help identify other issues.

Ms. Coombs stated that the change from “should” to “shall” to comply with state mandates is acceptable. Ms. Coombs also inquired about what was being done to account for SB 375. Mr. Muto stated that SB 375 was partially drafted to reduce green house gas emissions, which staff is complying with by addressing AB 32.

Mr. Adams asked for clarification regarding state guidelines and the use of “should”. Mr. Muto answered that the OPR state guidelines states that use of “should” should be discouraged. Mr. Adams followed up by asking what came about to make this fundamental change in the land use document. Mr. Muto answered that after discussing the issue with PBS&J, County Counsel and management, staff felt that going with more directive language would result in more defensible General Plan.

Mr. Silver commented that recent court cases regarding general plans have shown that jurisdictions have flexibility when it comes to decision making, and that the interests group need not focus on the “should” and “shall”.

Ms. Higgins asked how staff would be addressing comments submitted on the Land Use element. Mr. Muto stated that every comment submitted on the draft land use element will be reviewed and considered by staff.

Mr. Peugh stated that he did not see the change in language to be an issue.

Mr. Shibley asked if it was a requirement to update the community plans every 5 years. Mr. Muto stated that there is no specific time frame to update the community plans, but it is necessary so that staff can eliminate any inconsistencies with the general plan.

Ms. Coombs asked County Counsel what the decision would be when there is an inconsistency between the general plan and a community plan. Ms. Anzures stated that there cannot be a conflict between the two documents, and that it is state mandate to have a consistent general plan. Mr. Muto followed up by stating that staff will spend time identifying inconsistencies, and if there is not enough time staff will look into possibly phasing the community plan update process.

Mr. Adams inquired about policy LU 1.8. Mr. Muto explained that LU 1.8 allows for a single project site to place their total density yield anywhere on the project site as long as you are consistent with the community character.

Mr. Adams followed up by asking how the County defines community character. Mr. Muto answered that the community plans will define the specific community characteristics.

Mr. Whalen asked if the County's intent was to task the individual communities with updating the community plans. Mr. Muto answered no, and that the County will work with the individual communities on updating the plans. Mr. Whalen followed up by asking if the County will require communities to address things such as AB 32. Mr. Muto answered that staff will create general guidance, but will require more work at the specific community level since all the communities are unique and have different constraints.

Mr. Tabb stated that a substantial amount of effort from the Interest Group was spent on conservation and subdivisions, and asked where specifically it was in the Draft Land Use element. Mr. Muto stated that there are a number of different policies that talk about flexibility and lot design, and this will be discussed further at our next Interest Group meeting.

Mr. Tabb stated that he hopes the work from the Interest Group on the conservation subdivision will not be discarded. Mr. Muto answered that the work provided by the Interest Group will not be wasted, and that the Conservation Subdivision program will be a topic at the next Interest Group meeting for discussion.

Mr. Tabb suggested that the formation of a subcommittee to discuss the Conservation Subdivision Program.

Mr. Stehly stated that the Conservation Subdivision Program is a good thing in the stand point of the Farm bureau because it isolates through clustering developments to the less productive agricultural land.

Ms. Higgins asked why the interest group had to abide to the brown act even though they were not elected officials. Ms. Anzures stated that the interest group was created by an official act of the Board of Supervisors which subjects the Interest Group to the Brown Act.

Mr. Shibley stated that he did not agree with forming a subcommittee to discuss the conservation subdivision program.

Mr. Whalen stated that he would prefer to work with the entire Interest Group and suggested not to form a subcommittee.

Agenda Item V: Presentation of Environmentally Superior Alternative

Mrs. Carmichael began her overview of the Environmentally Superior map by explaining the major concepts that drove the creation of the mapping alternative. Mrs. Carmichael explained that the process began by reviewing the referral map for areas that had environmental issues that could be mitigated by changing densities. Mrs. Carmichael explained that there were large sweeping changes such as SR-10 changing to RL-20, RL-20 to RL-40, RL-40 to RL-80 east of the CWA, and the return of the RL-160. Mrs. Carmichael explained that changes made to meet housing requirements were left on the environmentally superior. Mrs. Carmichael stated that in addition MRZ-2 zones that saw increases in density were dropped back to avoid conflicting land uses.

Mrs. Carmichael also explained that where the County had insufficient emergency response times these areas were reduced, for example in the County Islands.

Mr. Muto stated that the Environmentally Superior map will be available online for viewing and also available for purchase.

Mr. Silver asked if new referrals were being considered specifically in Valley Center. Mr. Muto stated that there are no more referral being considered, but there is one referral in Valley Center that remains unresolved in the Western portion of Valley Center. Mr. Muto further explained that the Board of Supervisor directed staff to put land use designations to support the development of a road from western valley center to I-15.

Mr. Wong was introduced and proceeded to give a summary on population statistics in the County.

Mr. Wong stated that the table was a summary of total population at build out for each of the alternatives. Mr. Wong explained that each of the 4 mapping alternatives (Referral, Draft Land Use, Hybrid, and Environmentally Superior) underwent the same modeling as

the previous maps, which took into account existing population, future households, vacancy rates, and persons per households.

Mr. Wong further stated that the population at build out for the 4 mapping alternatives were: Existing General Plan 768,000; Referral Map 677,000; Hybrid 670,000; Draft Land Use 669, 000; and Environmentally Superior 641,000.

Agenda Item VI: Environmental Impact Report, Notice or Preparation

Mr. Muto explained to the Interest Group that there was a Notice of Preparation (NOP) originally prepared in 2002, however due to the time elapsed staff wanted to ensure that the NOP was accurate and covered all state mandates and therefore was updated. Mr. Muto stated that the NOP would be released with a 30 day review period to provide comments on the NOP. Mr. Muto explained that the purpose of the NOP was to guide the scoping of the Environmentally Impact Report.

Mr. Muto stated that the due date for comments on the NOP is May 28, 2008. Mr. Muto also explained the County is mandated by state law to hold a NOP meeting which is scheduled for May 15, 2008.

Mr. Shibley asked if there will be a separate EIR for each of the 4 mapping alternatives. Mr. Muto answered that there will be one EIR, Mr. Muto further explained that the referral map is the proposed project and the 3 other maps will be evaluated in the EIR as alternatives.

Ms. Coombs asked why the referral map is considered to be the proposed project. Mr. Muto stated that the County currently has two endorsed maps (Referral, Draft Land Use), and CEQA requires that the alternative with the greatest impacts be evaluated in the EIR. Mr. Muto explained that the referral map is the proposed project because it is the most intensive in terms of density.

Agenda Item VII: Community Plans

Mr. Lardy referred to the community plan handout, and explained that the summary depicted the level of completeness of each of the community plans. Mr. Lardy explained that the Community plans will be provided to communities to ensure that the County has the most up to date version. Mr. Muto followed up by stating that the community plan summary identifies how much work will be necessary to complete the community plans.

Mr. Muto concluded the meeting with scheduling the next Interest Group meeting on June 27, 2008 at 10:30 am.
